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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
APRIL 26-27, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 26-27, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Hurriyet: As a result of ensuing clashes between the security forces on patrol in Yeniyazi village of Genc (Bingol) and the PKK/KADEK militants who disobeyed a "halt" warning, 2 soldiers were killed and 2 others were wounded yesterday. Additional soldiers and helicopters were dispatched from Bingol to the scene. Two more soldiers were wounded during the ongoing clashes.

3. Radikal/Tercuman: Kizilay's -Turkish Red Crescent- relief convoy to Northern Iraq departed Ankara. The humanitarian relief convoy is en route to Mosul and Kirkuk and consists of five trucks of food, water, medicine and medical items, four ambulances, and two communication devices. The President of Kizilay announced the value of the relief goods to Northern Iraq amounted to USD 4 million. It is reported donations from the Anatolian Development Foundation, the Industrialist and Businessmen Association of Marmara, the Turkish Pharmacists Union, and Americares contributed to the relief packages.

4. Radikal/Milli Gazete: Mersin-based Contigment company, operating for the UN, rented 8,000 square meters of indoor space at the Free Zone of Mardin. Mardin and Gaziantep will be used as logistical centers for UN's humanitarian relief and food assistance during the rebuilding of Iraq. Ahmet Caliskan, the President of Free Zone in Mardin, stated the 8,000 square meters of the covered area in the zone had already been leased for USD 13,000 per month.

5. Milliyet: The Chief Public Prosecutor of the Turkish Supreme Court brought charges against Salih Sarman, the former governor of Batman, for "awarding contracts in exchange for Mercedes cars." It is also claimed Salih Sarman founded special security units affiliated with him, and purchased weapons through illegal ways with a nod from then Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller. The indictment demands 18 years of imprisonment and prohibition from public services for Sarman.

6. Milliyet: "The US Consulate [in Istanbul] causes shopkeepers to go bankrupt. Because of tight security measures, the US Consulate General does not let even birds fly in the Tepebasi quarter. The shopkeepers, who have been complaining that their customers are treated like terrorists, are in big distress." The security circle around the US ConGen in Istanbul brought the shopkeepers in Tepebasi to the verge of bankruptcy. The shopkeepers said the increased security measures due to the war in Iraq hurt them very badly and added "We are living the prisoners' life in our own town. Our customers have been driven out. We have no power left to endure any longer. They had better go sooner." Anyone entering a nearby hotel with his luggage, anyone wanting to take a photograph, and tourists and passersby watching the Consulate building are thoroughly searched by the security guards. Hotel and restaurant operators in the vicinity gave the following account of the problems they have faced for the past one and a half years: Director of Monopol and Bristol Hotels, Adnan Guzelderen

stated, "One hotel was closed down. One restaurant is at the verge of going bankrupt because busses are not allowed to bring groups." Elan Hotel's Director, Fethi Yalcin said "beam lights are held to the eyes of our clients looking down on the streets from their windows." Info Hotel Owner, Osman Bilgi stated, "We told the Consulate that we were 'sufferers', but they responded there was nothing to do, and they were also taking these security measures for our own good." Hotel Bale Reception Director, Umut Sarko said "They tried to catch a cat in the street on the grounds that there might be a bomb tied to its strap. They interrogated the family of a student staying at our hotel for having taken a photograph." Hitit Gift Shop Owner, Ismail Akdemir said, "It is as though this is the American soil, and we are terrorists."

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

17. Bolge/Turkiye: Opposing to the privatization of Tekel -Monoploy- nationwide, Tek-Gida-Is - Monopoly and Food Industry Workers Union- members marched in Adana and held a press conference in front of the AKP building. Around 3,000 workers attended the press release, and shouted slogans "We are not going to allow Tekel to be sold;" "We are right, we will win;" "America's dogs, we will not allow the KITS -Public Enterprises- to be sold." Evrensel reported 1,500 workers in Malatya and 500 in Diyarbakir attended the anti-privatization meetings.
HOLTZ